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SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO  
IO/UNESCO FOR JANE COWLEY

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SUBJECT: USUNESCO: PRELIMINARY DRAFT CONVENTION WTO  
WILL HAVE EQUAL LEGAL STANDING, SAYS FRENCH TV 5  
DIRECTOR

1. Following is a rough translation of excerpts from an op-ed piece by a Jean-Jacques Aillagon, the President and Director General of TV 5, a French broadcast TV station. Aillagon is also a former Minister of Culture. The op-ed piece appears in the 21 September edition of Le Figaro, a right-of-center major French daily. (Comment. This piece seems to be part of an effort to inculcate the impression in the public at large that UNESCO preliminary draft Cultural Diversity Convention would, if adopted, supercede current international trade law. End comment.)

2. Begin rough translation.

In several days, the General Conference of UNESCO is going to discuss the preliminary draft convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions. Let UNESCO seize the occasion ("Puisse l'UNESCO saisir l'occasion") to, at long last, furnish an incontestable juridical base to the defense of the cultural exception, a base which other accords, such as the WTO, could not (successfully) challenge except, of course, for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Between the Fall 2003 General Conference and this one, an immense task has been completed. It concluded a task that I had started, in my capacity as Minister of Culture and Communication, together with Sheila Copps, at that time the Canadian Minister of Patrimony. In this battle, we put together a coalition of our counterpart Ministers of Culture, who are now united within an international network on cultural policy. .

I presented on 29 August 2002 to the (French) Council of Ministers a statement putting this battle at the center of engagement of the French government and of my ministry. It is this objective that drove us to impose the protection of cultural diversity into the draft European Constitution. Later, at the beginning of 2004, this statement was the most important theme in a memorandum of the French government about cultural cooperation in Europe..

End rough translation of excerpts.

Oliver

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